

REMARKS

Entry of the forgoing amendment and reconsideration of this Application is respectfully requested. For at least the reasons set forth below, it is submitted that entry of this amendment will place the present application in condition for allowance or reduce the number of issues on appeal. Upon entry of the foregoing amendment, claims 35 and 38-66 are pending in the application, with claims 35, 41, 48 and 63 being the independent claims. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner enter this amendment and reconsider and withdraw all outstanding objections and rejections.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's indication of allowable subject matter in claims 37, 38 and 41-48.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 35, 36, 39 and 40 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,578,496 B1 to Guard et al. ("the Guard patent").

Claim 35 has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 37, which was previously indicated as allowable, and intervening claim 36. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 35 is allowable as amended.

Dependent claim 36 is canceled, thereby rendering the rejection of claim 36 moot.

Dependent claims 39 and 40 are allowable at least because of their dependence upon claim 35.

New Claims

New claims 49-66 have been added, including independent claim 63. Independent claim 63 is a variation on allowable claim 41 and includes the subject matter of allowable claim 42. Applicants submit that independent claim 63 is allowable because it is of similar scope to allowable claims 41 and 42. Claims 49-62 and 64-66 are dependent on one of independent claims 35, 41, 48 and 63, and are thus allowable for at least their dependence upon those claims.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicants believe that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that further personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,
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